

PHARMACEUTICAL INNOVATION EXPANDS INTO THE US WITH FEMALE CEO

When it comes to business sustainability, our initial thoughts often revolve around improving organization efficiency, improving financial performance, and implementing a carbon reduction strategy.

However, in the UN's SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), the intergovernmental organization has recognized the need for gender parity within business.

"Gender is woven throughout the SDGs as it sits at the intersection of economic, social and environmental issues", states the UN. "It has its own Goal, SDG 5—with the ambition of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls—and is mentioned explicitly in 10 of the other Goals".

But, in 2023, are we close to achieving gender parity in leadership? A recent report by Forbes implies we have a long way to go - five generations, in fact.

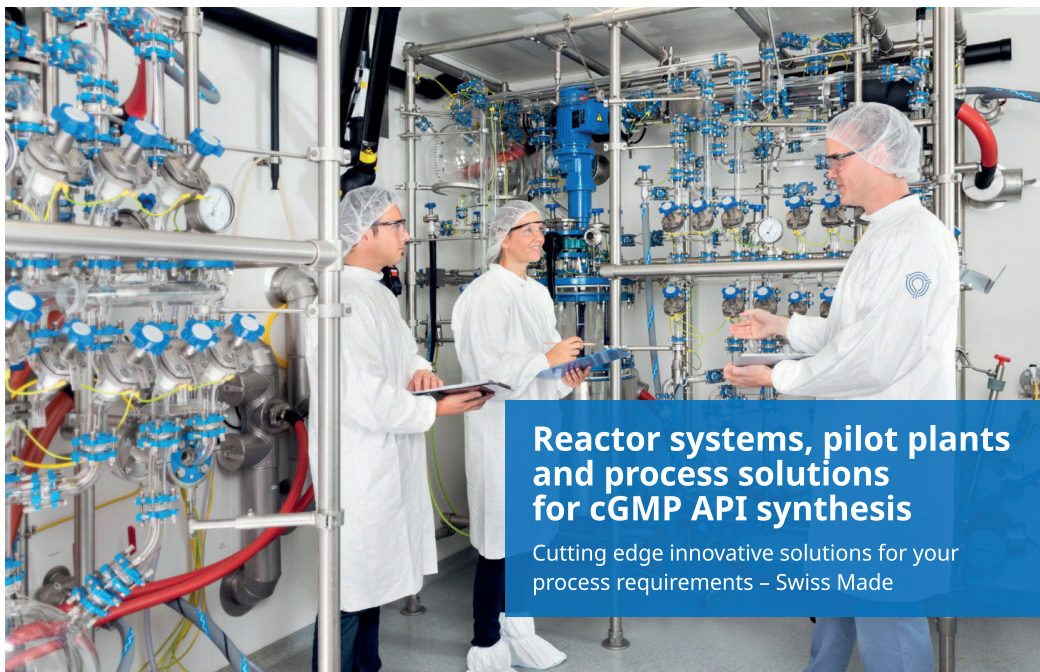
PharmaBlock

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The Global Gender Gap report published by the World Economic Forum highlights that at the current rate of progress, the global economy won't see gender parity for 131 years. It reports a further stark figure of 169 years to close the Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap.

President of PharmaBlock (USA), Dr. Jing Li, spoke to Business Enquirer about her views on Women in Leadership.

"We need to encourage women to fearlessly embrace new opportunities, whether it's the beginning of their career journey or taking on a c-suite role," she said.

She herself is an example of what happens when you use fear as a motivator, rather than a deterrent.

Having spent eight and a half years as an Associate Principal Scientist at Merck, Jing was offered the opportunity to join PharmaBlock.

"Whilst it was a fantastic opportunity, I was happy at Merck so it felt like a big risk to move businesses. Speaking with my daughter, she said it sounded "exciting". It was my responsibility to show my daughter that we mustn't let fear get in the way of opportunity," shared Jing.

This teachable moment is something that Jing aims to instil in business as well as around the dinner table.

"The leadership traits that women naturally possess are undervalued by business world," she said, "I believe the strengths we offer include softer skills which can help to create the

right environment for colleagues to be nurtured, motivated, and developed”.

Jing finds fulfillment in her role as President, USA, not only through PharmaBlock’s contribution to the pharmaceutical industry, but also by cultivating a work environment where colleagues can realize their full potential.

Speaking of PharmaBlock in the USA, Jing feels that she and her team have fostered an inclusive and collaborative culture where colleagues genuinely feel that they have ownership in both the business outputs and their roles.

“By ensuring that our vision is clearly communicated, colleagues understand their purpose and have a sense of meaning in what they do. The opportunities at PharmaBlock are unlimited,” she added.

PharmaBlock is now a fully integrated CRDMO (contract research, development, and manufacturing organization) with clear vision: focus on innovative chemistry and low-carbon manufacturing, bring sustainable and efficient solutions to its clients, ultimately supporting partners in bringing medicines to those in need more quickly.

When the business was first established in China in 2008, it began by designing and synthesizing a large collection of rationally designed, high-quality, and structurally diversified chemicals, known as building blocks in the field of drug R & D.

These building blocks are increasingly adopted by global drug hunters to enrich structure diversity, improve compound performance, expand patent space, and eventually accelerate drug discovery projects.

Over the years, PharmaBlock has accumulated expertise and earned the trust of its customers, allowing it to expand its business scope beyond being a building block supplier. It now serves as a comprehensive service and solution partner, supporting global pharmaceutical





and biotech companies throughout the drug R&D and commercial processes.

Enabled by sustainable strategies, PharmaBlock has gained a reputation as a quality partner for the development and manufacturing of pharmaceutical intermediates, drug substances, and drug products, all the while achieving cost efficiency and a greener footprint.

PharmaBlock team in China and the US are focusing on four key areas of sustainability, with of course, one of those being People.

"Supporting diversity and inclusivity is key to sustainability," said Ji. "It creates a collaborative and innovative work environment and has profound impacts on team motivation, productivity and long-term business success."

Supply chain resilience is a integral part of its sustainability strategy, as PharmaBlock considers not only its own supply chain, but also the role it plays in its clients' supply chain. "We have identified the supply chain values we consider to be crucial and have developed a robust way of working. We implement a supplier development program to enhance sustainability awareness and operations," explained Ji.

Another element to its sustainability strategy is geographic diversity, ensuring accessibility to its clients - which over time has included almost all of the top 20 pharmaceutical companies as well as hundreds of small to medium biotech companies across the globe.

As part of its geographic expansion efforts, PharmaBlock launched a new R&D facility in Pennsylvania, USA in March 2023. This brings the business footprint to five facilities, three in China and two in the USA. "We intend to further expand our presence in the USA as we see significant demand for drug development and manufacturing in the country," shared Ji.

In addition, PharmaBlock is dedicated



to fostering innovation. Its mission to “innovative chemistry for a better future” highlights that chemistry innovation can provide more effective, safer, easier to use, and more accessible products and services for the future; it is essential to do the right things at the very beginning, including addressing safety, environmental, and quality challenges, to enable greener and more efficient R&D and manufacturing processes.

With this mission at its core, PharmaBlock are pioneers in introducing continuous flow technology and biocatalysis into its manufacturing process. Whilst this concept has long been used in the petroleum industry, it is a new innovation for the pharma-chemical space. The new technologies are capable of overcoming the challenges that traditional chemistry processes typically struggle with.

“We are proud to have advanced innovative technologies like continuous flow manufacturing and biocatalysis for the pharmaceutical space. It brings many benefits to clients including scalability, safety, improved quality, reduced waste, cost saving and speed,” said Jing.

By designing and assembling manufacturing-scale equipment capable

of achieving yearly outputs of hundreds of metric tons, what used to take months to produce can now be accomplished in a matter of two to three weeks, with lower cost, reduced energy usage, and less waste. The company is even planning to expand its impact by commercializing some of its technologies and equipment, making their innovative technology accessible to the entire industry.

PharmaBlock’s commitment to innovation and sustainability has won several accolades recently, such as 2023 CMO Excellence in Green Chemistry Award by ACS and Top CDMOs by Pharma Tech Outlook. Additionally, PharmaBlock’s sustainability practices and experiences have been documented in the recently released book “Sustainability Leaders” by DCAT (the Drug, Chemical & Associated Technologies Association), an association of companies involved in the Bio/Pharmaceutical manufacturing value chain.

“When there is no solution available, we innovate,” shared Jing, “the innovation never stops as well as our never-ending pursuit of excellence.”

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